

HOLY TRINITY PEWLEY DOWN

Thinking about becoming a school governor?

1. The governing body of Holy Trinity Pewley Down has 18 governors in various categories:
 - Parent Governors (2) are elected by the parent body.
 - Staff Governors (2) - Headteacher (ex-officio) + one other elected by members of staff.
 - Local Authority Governor (1) nominated by the Local Authority and appointed by the governing body.
 - Co-opted governors (3) appointed by the governing body.
 - Foundation governors (10) are appointed by the Diocese or the Parochial Church Council.Governors are elected/appointed for a four-year term.

2. This note tells you more about what is involved in being a school governor. There is also plenty of information available on the internet. The most useful document is probably the DfE Governance Handbook (updated October 2020) which sets out the responsibilities of governing bodies in full.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

3. If you'd like to know more about the role of governors at HTPD, please contact Clare Brunet, Headteacher, or Rev Robert Cotton, Chair of Governors at rcotton@htpd.surrey.sch.uk or Deborah Pepper, Vice Chair of Governors at dpepper@htpd.surrey.sch.uk. For more information about the governors in our schools, please check out the HTPD website at:
<http://www.htpd.surrey.sch.uk/The-School/Our-School/Our-People/Governors.aspx>.

What does a governing body do?

4. Day to day management of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher and the senior leadership team. The role of governing bodies is strategic and covers 3 main areas:
 - Ensuring the school's clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
 - Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
 - Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

The DfE Governance Handbook makes it clear that the main purpose of maintained schools' governing bodies is to promote high standards of educational achievement of the school. To do its work well, the governing body works closely with the school and its leadership team – the relationship is often described as that of a 'critical friend'. As both schools are voluntary aided Church of England schools, the governing body also acts as the employer of staff and as its own admissions authority.

What makes a good school governor?

5. You will want to make a difference to the lives and education of all our children across both schools, to support the schools' ethos and to work with the schools, and fellow governors, to ensure that all our children achieve well. Governing bodies work collaboratively and decision-making is collective so you'll need to be an effective team player. You'll need to have time and energy to commit to the role and be prepared to take on what has become a significant collective responsibility. We welcome the external perspective which parent governors, whatever their background, bring to the school. Skills in law, HR, finance and communications would be a useful addition to complement those skills currently represented on the governing body.

How much time is involved in being a governor?

6. This varies widely depending on your role and how much time you have available. As a minimum, you would attend 3 meetings a term including the full governing body and any committees you were on. Some meetings are held in the evening; others during the daytime. If you chaired a committee or took

on a specific responsibility, you'd need to offer more time. In addition, we recommend that all governors undertake relevant training, which might take another half day a year.

What training do governors receive?

7. All governors receive an induction pack with more information about the schools, their role and wider educational issues. An experienced governor is nominated as mentor to support new governors through the induction process. We strongly encourage you to attend induction training offered either by the Diocese of Guildford or Strictly Education who provide education services on behalf of Surrey County Council. Governors are also encouraged to attend other, more specialist training in line with their interests or responsibilities and we run whole governing body training sessions as well from time to time.

How does the governing body carry out its responsibilities?

8. The governing body exercises its responsibilities in different ways:
- **Through termly meetings of the governing body** – where major issues are discussed and decisions taken. Examples include ratifying the annual budget, discussing priorities for the annual School Development Plan and hearing from staff about particular school initiatives.
 - **Through meetings of committees of the governing body** – these include Learning, Every Child Matters, Finance and Premises, Staffing and Admissions and all governors belong to at least one committee. Issues are discussed and reviewed in much more detail and School Development Plan priorities are monitored. There is an increasing emphasis on monitoring data produced by the school – both about children's achievement and progress and financial information.
 - **Through support from individual governors** – for example, those governors who have particular responsibilities eg for special educational needs or who offer their skills for particular projects eg building, financial or legal.

How do governors keep in touch with the school?

9. In many different ways including:
- **Committee membership** - which means you can get involved in a particular aspect of school life which interests you.
 - **A particular role** – which might be for special educational needs, safeguarding or as responsible officer for school finances.
 - **Helping in school** – not all governors have time for this, but those who do are very welcome.
 - **Governor visits** – usually linked to the monitoring of a particular school development plan priority. These are arranged in advance and can include time in class and discussion with school leaders. Governors are encouraged to feed back the results to the governing body.
 - **School events** – governors are warmly welcomed to all school and FOPS/HTSC events including assemblies, school plays, special visitors and school fairs.
 - **Email communication** within the Governing Body.

To whom is the governing body accountable?

10. The governing body is accountable to the children and parents and carers of the schools, as well as to the Local Authority, the Diocese of Guildford and the local community, for providing high quality education for all its pupils and discharging its statutory responsibilities. The governing body is also responsible to OFSTED and its work is subject to rigorous scrutiny during inspections. The school office at Pewley Down holds copies of the minutes of all meetings of the governing body and its committees which are available to read with the exception of confidential annexes.